



News Release

For Immediate Release
March 22, 2004
Media contact:
Brenda Bodily
Diabetes Prevention & Control Program
Office: 801-538-6896

Increased Pregnancy Problems Linked to Diabetes

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The number of women who develop gestational diabetes has increased substantially over the past decade as well as the resulting pregnancy and delivery problems related to gestational diabetes, according to the Utah Department of Health (UDOH).

Gestational diabetes appears in about 2-5 percent of women during pregnancy but disappears after delivery. The number of women developing gestational diabetes has doubled in Utah over the past decade from 507 births in 1990 to 1,109 in 2001. This increase is strongly linked to a rise in pregnancy and delivery problems.

“The increase in gestational diabetes since 1990 is much higher than expected since the total births in Utah grew at a much smaller rate (24%) during that time,” said Brenda Bodily, Information Specialist, Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, UDOH.

Utah birth records from 1999 to 2001 show that when compared with mothers without gestational diabetes, mothers with gestational diabetes had:

- Twice the rates of pregnancy-induced high blood pressure (11.5% vs. 5.2%)
- Higher rates of cesarean-section (14.7% vs. 8.5%)
- Higher rates of pre-term birth (11.5% vs. 7.8%)
- Higher rates of giving birth to a baby weighing over nine pounds (13.8% vs. 7.4%)

In addition, children of mothers who had diabetes during pregnancy appear to have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes and obesity later in life.

-MORE-

Page 2 - Increased Pregnancy Problems Linked to Diabetes

“While the rising rates of diabetes are troubling, we are especially concerned about the rapid increase in gestational diabetes because of its negative effect on pregnancies and the baby later in life,” said Bodily.

Women who are older and overweight are more likely to get gestational diabetes than women who are younger and not overweight. Other risk factors are like those of type 2 diabetes, such as family history of diabetes and being a member of a minority racial or ethnic group.

“We recommend that women who have any risk factors for diabetes get early prenatal checkups and care,” said Bodily. “Detecting gestational diabetes early in pregnancy may reduce the risk of babies born with health problems.”

The DPCP also encourages Utahns who are at risk for diabetes, those who have had gestational diabetes or have any of the following symptoms of diabetes, to get tested during March Diabetes Alert.

- Blurry vision
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination
- Sores that are slow to heal
- Feeling very tired much of the time

For a screening location, call the Utah Department of Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542 (toll-free). The DPCP provides additional gestational and other diabetes information at www.health.utah.gov/diabetes.

- END -

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyle.

